(e) Improvement on operational efficiency is an ongoing exercise. The operations are monitored closely and effective steps are taken to take remedial measures whenever a problem is notified. Similarly, Marketing efforts are undertaken through customer meets 'personal contacts by Marketing executives etc.

US Consulate in Hyderabad

297.SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a sharp increase in submission in visa application in the country;

(b) if so, details of visa applications submitted for obtaining visa for USA in Hyderabad circle during the last five years, year-wise;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the US Administration has decided to open a Consulate in Hyderabad,

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any time-frame has been fixed therefor;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) what measures the US is taking to give more priority to student visas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a), (b) and (g) Do not fall under the purview of the Government of India.

(c) to (f) The US Government sought approval to establish a Consulate in Hyderabad in January, 2006 that would provide full range of normal consular services.

Hyderabad generates a very large number of business, educational and family visa applications for the US owing to a large NRI community in the US belonging to Andhra Pradesh. Currently, all visa applications have to be submitted at the US Consulate General in Chennai, causing considerable logistical difficulties for visa applicants.

Government accorded approval, in principle, to the US Government to establish a Consulate at Hyderabad in February, 2006. The official announcement to open a Consulate in Hyderabad was made during the visit of President George Bush to India in March, 2006.

List of wanted Criminal

†298. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have dispatched Pakistan Government the list of wanted criminals and terrorists at present residing over there in the last three years and till date;

(b) if so, the details thereof, till date;

(c) whether Pakistan Government have shown any interest in handing over such wanted criminals and terrorists to India; and

(d) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Lists of criminals, known to be residing in Pakistan, were handed over to Pakistan during the Home Secretary level talks on "Terrorism and Drug Trafficking" held in 2004, 2005 and 2006, with the request that they be apprehended and handed over to India. Pakistan has not responded positively to these requests.

Candidature for Secretary General of UN

299. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan and China have decided to oppose candidature of Mr. Shashi Tharoor for the position of Secretary General of UN;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the diplomatic action taken by Government to persuade them not to stand in the way of Mr. Tharoor's candidature and muster support from other members in his favour?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.